

Remarks

Claims 1-19, 30 and 31 are currently pending. Claims 30 and 31 were allowed in the October 28, 2005 Office Action. However, that Office Action rejected the other pending claims. Through the above amendment, claims 1-8 and 10-19 are now believed to address the Office Action's remaining concerns. Hence, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of amended claims 1-8 and 10-19 as well.

Previously Allowed Subject Matter

As noted above, claims 30 and 31 were indicated to be allowed in the March 16, 2006 Office Action. Since they are not being amended by this response, they should remain allowed.

Art Rejections

Applicants have responded to the substantive rejections as follows:

A. Applicants now present claim 4 in independent form, with a further clarification that the perforation covering layer being referred to is a different structure than the peel-off cleaning attachment. The rejection of claim 4 acknowledged that none of the art but James et al. was pertinent to the perforated packet with a peel-off layer limitation. It is respectfully noted that James et al. also does not teach or suggest this limitation.

James et al. does not teach a "packet" of surface treatment material, much less one that is perforated, much less one that has its perforations covered by a peel-off layer. Rather, James et al. discloses a mitt with an impregnated pad, that pad covered by a peel-off cover. Apart from the fact that an impregnated pad is not a packet, James et al. did not disclose any perforations in the pad.

Moreover, in claim 4 the peel-off layer over the perforations were a separate structure from the cleaning attachment (which can also be peeled off). See e.g. Figs. 13A and 13B which show the cleaning attachment layer 18 as distinct from the peel-off layer 82. One can preserve the cleaning attachment for use with multiple replacement packets, while still providing a means associated with the packet for preventing leakage prior to installation. Nothing in James et al. (or any of the other cited art) suggests this double peel-off feature.

In any event, claim 4 has now been amended to make this clearer. Hence, there should be no doubt that James et al. does not teach or suggest this feature of claim 4.

B. With respect to claim 1, and thus also claims 2, 3, 5-8 and 10-19, it has now been clarified that the packet is between a portion of the cleaning attachment and the carrier leaving only a portion of the cleaning attachment linked to the carrier by such a fastener system. Further, claim 9 subject matter has been incorporated into these claims (and hence claim 9 has been canceled).

Fig. 13B shows how the cleaning attachment 18 can contact an outer frame of the carrier with the packet blocking the middle portion. It is unexpected that such a structure would adequately hold the cleaning attachment in place. The issue is not whether Zayas's hook and loops would also work in such a structure. The issue is whether the art would have thought that too little attachment area remained once the packet took up a large piece of the middle area. In the examiner's remarks it was stressed that a partial attachment feature was not directly stressed in the claims. That feature has now been included in these claims.

In any event, the Office Action also acknowledged that the cited art did not teach a generally triangular cleaning attachment used in this type of device. However, it asserted a lack of a particular advantage or problem solved by virtue of this shape.

A primary utility of the present invention is to clean the areas around a tub or shower surround (see paragraph [0056]). Such structures have sharp corners where dirt collects, and also have, where tile and grout are used, crevices along depressed grout surfaces where dirt collects. The pointed front end of a generally triangularly shaped cleaning attachment, when reciprocally moved, acts as a driver to drive dirt out of such narrow areas. A circular cleaning head could not achieve this (and thus would be more suitable for countertops). Even shapes such as a rectangular shape would be less desirable for this utility (as the flat front end of the device could not as easily dig into the corner held dirt).

Moreover, the combination of a generally triangular cleaning attachment with a packet shape is unexpected in the context of a hook-and-loop type attachment system used with high speed reciprocation. As the triangle narrows, it leaves less

and rid extra space frame area available for the cleaning attachment to contact at the very area at the front which receives the greatest shear forces during cleaning.

Hence, wholly apart from limitations relating to using a cleaning attachment that attaches at a portion of the carrier, and a generally triangular cleaning attachment shape, the combination of the two, in the context of the other features of claim 1, is unexpected. Hence, reconsideration and allowance of amended claims 1-3, 5-8 and 10-19 is also respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Accordingly, claims 1-8 and 10-19 as further amended, and claims 30-31 as previously allowed, are believed to be in allowable form. Confirmation of allowance of these claims is therefore respectfully requested.

No fees are believed necessary for consideration of this response. In this regard, there is now one fewer claim. Also, while there is now one additional independent claim as compared to the pending claims prior to this amendment, after entry of the amendment there still will be only three independent claims. Should any additional fees nevertheless be needed for full consideration of this amendment, please charge any fees believed necessary in connection with this response to Deposit Account No. 10-0849.

Respectfully submitted,

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